



"Serving Michigan's Cattlemen Since 1960"

Written Testimony for the Hearing Record

Senate Appropriations Department of Agriculture Subcommittee Senate Standing Committee on Agriculture

October 21, 2009

On behalf of Michigan beef producers, the Michigan Cattlemen's Association (MCA) respectfully urges state legislators to put a stop to Governor Jennifer Granholm's Executive Order, which not only eliminates the authority of the Commission to select and manage the director of the department, but it tears down the role of the Michigan Agriculture Commission, reducing it from a public body with accountability and oversight functions, to one of an advisory role

MCA believes that the current bi-partisan Commission system with the authority to employ the Michigan Department of Agriculture director is the correct approach for modern government. If we were creating a new responsive system that would lead to transparency, effectiveness and accountability with both public and farmer input, it would look much like what we have today with the Michigan Agriculture Commission.

Under the Governor's system, the final decisions, including revisions to Generally Accepted Agriculture and Management Practices for Michigan's Right to Farm Act, would be made solely by the director and the Commission of Agriculture's role would be relegated to simply providing a forum for information gathering.

Replacing the open style of the Commission with a closed, behind-doors approach denies the citizens of Michigan the transparency and accountability they deserve. This approach strips farmers of their ability to work in partnership with the Commission to solve problems dealing with food safety, environment and animal health.

For these reasons, MCA is calling on state legislators to bring this issue to a vote and overturn the Executive Order. We request that you allow the current structure, which has served the agriculture community very well for over four decades, to remain in place.